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THE IRON SOLDIER

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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Al-Anbar Province, Iraq

DEALER COMPANY AND IRAQI ARMY FIND LARGE WEAPONS CACHE

By Capt. Chris Cannon - 2/69 Public Affairs Officer



Weapons and materials to make IEDs were found throughout the soccer stadium. The largest portion of the cache was found in a room buried deep under the stadium.

RAMADI, Iraq – Task Force 2-69 Armors Dealer Company Commander Capt. Roy Bolar had no idea how fruitful his company's efforts would prove during Operation Bulldog.

During a recent raid on an Iraqi soccer stadium in downtown Ramadi, Dealer Company, along with elements of the 876th Engineers, and the 3-2-1 Iraqi Army, set out to clear and search an area habitually known for terrorist activity. Through the help of local Iraqis, TF 2-69 discovered that a neighborhood soccer stadium was actually an insurgent munitions dump.

"It ended up being a complete IED

factory," said Capt. Bolar, a Manchester, Ohio resident.

Throughout the search, sporadic attacks of small arms fire were targeted against the Iraqi and Coalition forces. The insurgents were no doubt troubled by the fact that one of their enemy hide-outs was about to be discovered.

Through the use of a motorcycle, the insurgents waited until women and young children began crossing the streets before firing upon positions. Essentially, the terrorists used these young children to screen their movements; in effect, using them as human shields. At one point dur-

ing the operation, Coalition and Iraqi Forces engaged and destroyed one of these enemy reconnaissance teams, sparing the civilians from harm.

Platoons from the 3-2-1 Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces conducted clearing and searching procedures inside the stadium. Upon completion of this initial search, nothing out of the ordinary was found. Then a more thorough search was conducted which resulted in the discovery of weapons caches.

"I'm extremely impressed with the tenacity of the Iraqi Army and our Soldiers. This was not an easy cache to find. Even under direct fire contact, our guys continued to search."

At the completion of the operation, 2nd Lt. Christopher Wike, a platoon leader with the 876th Engineers and a resident of Ebensburg, Pa., said, "The caches were really difficult to get to, but my guys would not take no for an answer. They did a really great job. The Iraqi Army provided good security for us while we worked and my NCOs did a great job."

Based on the results of this successful operation, TF 2-69 feels it may have been able to severely debilitate terrorist activity in and around the area of the soccer stadium.

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A MESSAGE FROM IRON 6



COL (P) John L. Gronski
2/28 BCT Commander

The prayers and heartfelt sympathies of every Iron Soldier go out to the families and friends of our honored dead.

Even though every Soldier, Marine, Airmen and Sailor knows the inherent dangers and risks associated with our profession, it is always hard to lose a comrade. Losing a friend is tough, but it is times like these that bring all of us even closer together. The loss of a fellow warrior only strengthens our resolve to fight harder to defeat the terrorist, so the people of Iraq will have freedom and the streets of America will be more secure. We will continue to fight so these Brave Warriors will not have died in vain. Every one of these Soldiers and Marines who made the ultimate sacrifice served courageously and are true heroes.

Through our actions we will honor our fallen comrades. All of us who wear our nation's combat uniform live by a military code and our military values. We will honor the memory of those who have gone before us by treating the Iraqi people with dignity and respect and killing or detaining insurgents and terrorists.

Iron Soldiers!

Col. John L. Gronski - 2BCT Commander

2-222 AWARDS PURPLE HEARTS

By 1st Lt. Lee Kelley

RAMADI, Iraq – Task Force 2-222nd Field Artillery Battalion, otherwise known as "The Triple Deuce," has awarded four Purple Hearts to Soldiers wounded in action in Iraq.

The leadership of the Triple Deuce is honored to award the medals, but hopes these will be the last. That's because the only way to qualify for a Purple Heart is by being injured in combat.

Spc. Justin Johns, of Monroe, Utah, Spc. Brandon Lloyd, from Salt Lake City, and Spc. Jeremy Cox of Scottsboro, Tenn., are members of Alpha Battery 2-222 FA. Spc. Richard Moreno, of Phoenix, Arizona, is a member of 2-222 Headquarters Battery. Each of these Soldiers has been wounded in IED attacks in recent months while working Stability and Support Operations in and around Ramadi, Iraq. Luckily, all of their injuries were minor, and the Soldiers returned to duty shortly after the incidents.

When asked about the award ceremony, the 2-222 FA Command Sergeant Major, Bruce Summers said, "These young men showed bravery in combat, and continue to be a viable part of the Mighty Triple Deuce. We are proud to have them on our team."



Four Task Force 222 Field Artillery Soldiers receive Purple Hearts for being wounded in action, while conducting military operations in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq. (Left to Right) Spc. Richard Moreno, Spc. Jeremy Cox, Spc. Justin Johns, Spc. Brandon Lloyd.

Photo by Maj. Sterling McMurrin

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MAILING ADDRESSES FOR :

Ar-Ramadi
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Soldiers Unit
Camp Ar-Ramadi
APO, AE 09362-9997

Habbaniyah / Taqaddum
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Taqaddum
APO, AE 09381

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Soldiers Unit
Camp Al Asad
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Please take into consideration, when mailing perishables: mail could take up to two weeks to reach Soldiers.

NEBRASKA SOLDIER SAVES LIVES

by 2nd Lt. Mathew Misfeldt

RAMADI, Iraq— On August 28, 2005, Private First Class Darin D. Nelson, 1st Platoon, A Troop, 1-167 Cavalry, United States Army, heroically distinguished himself by demonstrating exceptional valor in the face of the enemy.

A resident of Fremont, Neb., Nelson is assigned as a Driver/Combat Life Saver (CLS). Nelson rushed to the aid of Soldiers who had been attacked by insurgents while occupying an outpost outside the city of Ramadi. There were two injured Soldiers and one Humvee on fire at the outpost. Upon arriving at the outpost, Nelson rushed to extinguish the Humvee fire.

The Humvee contained ammunition and the fire was causing the ammunition to detonate. Even as the ammunition continued to explode, Nelson continued to fight the fire at a dangerously close range, no more than three feet from the Humvee. At one point he was leaning into the vehicle through an open door to get closer to the fire. He continued to fight the flames until the contents of the fire extinguisher had been exhausted. The Humvee was ultimately consumed by the fire.

After attempting to extinguish the fire, Nelson moved to the two injured Soldiers and began to administer first aid. A trained Combat Lifesaver (CLS), Nelson treated two injured Soldiers using available first aid materials. While he conducted triage and treatment, the ammunition from the burning Humvee continued to explode just twelve feet away. Remains of ammunition rounds that were



Private First Class Darin D. Nelson, 1st Platoon, A Troop, 1-167 Cavalry, United States Army, heroically distinguished himself by demonstrating exceptional valor in the face of the enemy. Nelson is a resident of Fremont, Neb., and is assigned as a Driver/Combat Life Saver.

Photo by Capt. Alfred A. Smith

exploding in the fire were landing just a few feet of his position. "I ask myself how I had the guts to do what I did, I could feel pieces of cement hitting me as the 50 cal. rounds hit against a wall near me," said Nelson. When the Combat Medics arrived on scene Nelson identified the most critical Soldier and directed the medics to evacuate him first.

"This action by Pfc. Nelson just displays the importance he placed on his individual training and the over all importance he placed on members of his team that wear the same uniform. Troop A 1-167 CAV's motto is, "We're men, We fix

things." This action by Pfc. Nelson was extended to his fellow Soldiers as we are all on the same team, and I'm confident that any one of my Soldiers would have reacted in a similar manner if the roles were reversed," said Troop Commander Cpt. Jeff Searcy.

Private First Class Darin D. Nelson's actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism and reflect distinct credit upon himself, his Command and the United States Army. "Any one of the guys in my platoon would have done what I did, without giving it a second thought." Nelson said.

LARGE CACHE FOUND AT SOCCER STADIUM

Continued From Page 1

"I'm extremely impressed with the tenacity of the Iraqi Army and our Soldiers. This was not an easy cache to find. Even under direct fire contact, our guys continued to search. It was a major victory for east Ramadi. We took the stadium away from the control of the insurgents and turned it back over to the Iraqi locals," said Bolar as he reflected back on the overall operation

Even after the weapons cache was profiled and documented, the insurgents tried once last attempt to destroy the Soldiers that discovered their weapons cache but were turned back by the deter-

mination to complete the mission by TF 2-69.

Through the combined effort of Iraqi and Coalition forces, the insurgents in Al Anbar were struck a crippling blow to their terrorist operations. With the October 15, constitutional referendum elections just around the corner, the discovery and destruction of the cache came at an opportune time for the citizens of Ramadi.



All the material needed to make a large IED were found near the entrance to the soccer stadium.

CHARLIE MED SUPPORTS LIONESS MISSION

by Spc. Kristy L. Kroll

Two medics from Charlie Co. 228 FSB recently returned from a Lioness mission at a combat outpost. Sgt. Jessica Harper, assigned to E Company 728th Medical Support Battalion, Lancaster, Pa., is a full time student at Lock Haven University and an avid athlete who plays soccer and lacrosse. She resides in Sellersville, PA. Her battle buddy, Spc. Marilyn Kelly, assigned to Charlie Co. 228 FSB, Allentown, Pa., is a resident of Bethlehem, Pa., where she is a supervisor for UPS.

The Lioness mission to which they were assigned consisted of searching females at a Ramadi Entry Control Point, searching vehicles and their occupants, and providing security for a university by screening students for explosives and weapons.

These Lionesses carried their aid bags just in case of any unforeseen emergencies, but luckily, "nothing out of the ordinary happened," said Kelly. Both Harper and Kelly know that the threat is real. Harper said, "With the lioness mission, we didn't really know what to expect, however, previous missions have

helped us with the fear of going outside the wire." The mission was a learning experience for both of them, working with interpreters and the male Soldiers on the front line.

Kelly enjoyed learning the Arabic language through interaction with some of the local Iraqi population. "All Iraqis don't hate us here. They shake our hands and make an effort to learn our language," she said. Kelly believes that the US presence in Iraq is having a positive impact.

Harper said that she would volunteer for future Lioness missions, "It was fun to step outside of the medic realm and work on basic Soldiering skills." By the end of the mission, the fears of their original concern became more of an adventure.

Kelly said, "It made me a better Soldier; it made me a better person." Harper said, "The Lioness missions are good for the advancement of women on the front lines."

Harper and Kelly have decided to

create a slideshow demonstration to portray the experiences of Lioness duty. Their goal is to dispel the myths about Lioness duty and to help female Soldiers to have a better understanding of the job.

They encourage female Soldiers to consider Lioness missions for the opportunity and experience.



(Left to Right) Medics, Spc. Marilyn Kelly from Bethlehem, Pa., and Sgt. Jessica Harper of Sellersville, Pa., during a Lioness mission in Ramadi, Iraq.

MISSION FIRST, SOLDIERS ALWAYS

By 1st Lt. Eric Leeds

It's a normal occurrence for Soldiers to do their job. It's also normal for Soldiers to work long hours. What really makes the Soldiers from these two units unique is their tireless efforts to support a critical mission and adapt to an ever changing battlefield.

The Soldiers from A Co 228 FSB and 2-222FA changed their mission parameters, offloading cargo destined for a supply convoy, in order to support a critical mission for the 2-69AR. The details of the mission aren't important but the effort and tenacity of these drivers is.

Starting on a Tuesday these individuals went about their normal day. Late that afternoon mission parameters changed and the Soldiers from the 2-222FA and A Co 228FSB were called in. These Soldiers utilized Platform Loading Systems (PLS) and 1088 tractors and trailers to



The Iron Soldiers from Task Force 2-222 (Triple Deuce) are just a few of the individuals that assisted in the mission to deliver force protection materials to Task Force 2-69 Armor.

transport vital force protection materials to the 2-69AR in the city of Ramadi. Once on station these drivers worked tirelessly through the evening to unload their cargo.

Upon returning early that morning the drivers were afforded a few hours

rest before they were back at the loading point for another mission to the 2-69AR area of operations. Staff Sgt. Hines of A Co 228FSB utilized ingenious and efficient loading techniques to maximize the lift capabilities of each truck. In doing this, they only had to make one run instead of two, keeping excess Soldiers off the road. However this ingenuity still didn't help the fact that these drivers had to wait for several hours while an IED was cleared before they could complete their mission.

When all was said and done the Soldiers of the 2-222FA and

A Co 228FSB worked for nearly 72 hrs delivering Texas Barriers, T Barriers, Jersey Barriers, Generators, fencing, and sandbags. The only casualties being a slightly damaged PLS and some very tired bodies.

This is what makes an IRON SOLDIER.

TEACHING “COMBAT SWEEPING” OPS by Spc. Jacob A. Stivers

The 135th Engineers are doing more for the Iraqis than fighting for their freedom. Team Castle has been training Iraqi Army Soldiers the art of engineering on the battlefield.

To keep themselves and the Iraqi citizens safe; the 135th is showing them how to find weapon caches and improvised explosive devices buried in the cities and countryside. This is done through the use of mine detectors. The 135th Engineer Company has been very successful in finding these explosives before they can be used against coalition forces.

Team Castle won't be here forever and that is why they have begun teaching the Iraqis their techniques, to ensure they can keep the people safe long after coalition forces are gone.

As Sgt. Arthur Malchert said, “It is good that we teach the Iraqi Army this because when we leave, insurgents will continue to set roadside bombs and they need to know how to find them.”

The Iraqi Army is extremely motivated and eager to learn these techniques from the 135th, and gain a better understanding of how they can assist in current operations. The engineers give basic instructions on how to use the sweeper, and then set up a practical ex-



Spc. Pierce and an interpreter watch as Iraqi Soldiers make a potential find.

ercise by burying previously recovered weapons for them to discover. Team Castle sets up several different scenarios, trying to mimic the techniques that they observe the insurgents using on the battlefield. For example, one of the exercises consists of burying weapons in an area with a lot of metal and trash. This can sometimes be confusing for the operators of the mine detector but helps



Sgt. Brines instructs Iraqi Soldiers on the use of mine detectors.

them to prepare for what they will find during real operations.

Another critical thing the Iraqis have learned during this training is the importance of security. While the Iraqis are not yet conducting sweep missions on their own, they often accompany the 135th Engineers and provide security for the operation. When they first began providing security, they were more interested in what the Engineers were finding instead of focusing on making sure that no one threatened their perimeter. Now that they understand what is involved in recovering these weapons, they provide much more effective security. “Since we began training the Iraqi Army, I feel much safer with them providing security,” 1LT Timothy Newman said. “It is important to remember that there are people out there that don't want us to find these [weapons caches], and we need to be safeguarded when we are digging them up.”

Even though the Iraqi Army Soldiers learn quickly, and retain all of the information, repetition is key to mastering these engineering techniques. It is Team Castle's job to make sure they can perform successful sweep missions by themselves. “We can't teach them once and assume they will be fine,” Sgt Aaron

Ochoa said. “They have to continue training to be sure they are proficient.”

Perhaps the most important benefit of this training is the mutual respect and trust that continues to develop between the U.S. and Iraqi Forces. Through their interpreter, the Iraqi Soldiers told the engineers that they love going out on missions with them because they always seem to find weapons and take them out of the hands of the people who are using them against all of us.

“Since we began training the Iraqi Army, I feel much safer with them providing security”

While the language barrier is still a hindrance, the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers are beginning to get to know the people they fight alongside more and more. Spc. Larry Pierce recognizes that this is the start of a new partnership that he hadn't really expected. “It's just like training with any other Soldier,” he said. “When you can train with them and get to know them in an environment like this, there is a bond that forms. Once that's there, you feel a lot safer with that guy watching your back.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT LEAVE AND PASS



Sgt. Emily Voorhees
2 BCT Leave & Pass NCO

The Leave and Pass program will begin in October. There were a few questions that we had so the Iron Soldier went right to the expert.

Sgt. Emily Voorhees of the Brigade S-1 oversees the program and was gracious enough to sit down and answer a few questions for the Iron Soldier.

IS: Can I get leave and a pass?

Sgt. V: It is the Brigade Commander's intent that all Soldiers have the opportunity to take either 15 days of leave OR two 4 day passes. Although this is the intent, there is no guarantee that each Soldier will have this opportunity.

IS: When does my leave start?

Sgt. V: Chargeable leave begins the day after arrival at the commercial airport nearest to the leave address. Chargeable leave ends the day prior to returning to the commercial airport nearest to the leave address.

IS: Do I have to take all 15 days of leave and is travel time included in the 15 days?

Sgt. V: Requests for R&R leave of less than 15 days must go thru the Soldier's chain of command. The approving authority is the first General Officer of the 2 MARDIV.



An Iranian restaurant in Doha.

IS: Are there any travel restrictions for leave?

Sgt. V: Soldiers are restricted from traveling to countries that are on the State Department's Current Travel Warning list.

This includes Sudan, Bosnia, Algeria, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kenya, Iran, Congo-Kinshasa, Nepal, Israel, Afghanistan, Haiti, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Yemen, Columbia, Lebanon, Central African Republic, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burundi. Please visit

www.travel.state.gov to view the most up to date list. If you are interested in traveling outside the United States, please have your company command meet with the BN S2 shop for further information and policies.

IS: What is done with my weapon, or any other sensitive items?

Sgt. V: All sensitive items (to include weapon) will be turned into each Soldier's company before the Soldier leaves the FOB for R&R leave. When the Soldier is taking a CONVOY or Flight to TQ, they will carry their weapon. Upon arrival at TQ, the Soldier will turn their weapon over to a unit representative. The unit representative(s) will be responsible to return the weapon(s) to the company armorer.



The Olympic size swimming pool at Camp Al Sayliyah. Notice the Chilis restaurant located poolside. Starbucks and Pizza Hut are also located a short distance away.

IS: What is the travel uniform for pass or leave?

Sgt. V: Soldiers will travel in a **clean and serviceable** ACU or DCU uniform while traveling to and from Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar (the Pass site.)

While traveling in theater for leave Soldiers will wear a clean and serviceable ACU or DCU uniform. The uniform Soldiers are required to wear while traveling to and from the leave destination will depend on the means of transportation. The flight information will be provided at Ali Al Salem, Kuwait.

On commercial flights Soldiers will wear civilian clothing. Guide lines for civilian attire: **NO** shorts, plain white T-shirts, sleeveless shirts, open toe shoes, or any clothing that would associate someone with the military.

On charter flights Soldiers will wear either the ACU or DCU uniform.

IS: What can we do on pass?

Sgt. V: There are several activities (free and charged) you can participate while on pass at Qatar. Some of the activities include but are not limited to: Trips to the local malls, water sports (jet skiing, tubing, banana boat), cruise, desert safari, fishing trips, weaponry museum and Doha Zoo. Please note: Soldiers can only participate in these activities one out of the four days on pass.

Soldiers are authorized to consume alcoholic beverages while on pass at Qatar. The current alcohol beverage limit is three drinks of beer, wine, or hard liquor a day. Soldiers must be 21 years of age or older to consume or purchase alcohol.

On post activities include a fitness center, day spa, pool, game room, TV room, video center, movie theater, phone center, computer cen-

ter, PX, and gift shop. Also located on post is a Burger King, Subway, and Pizza Inn.

IS: While I'm home who do I contact with an emergency or any other questions?

Sgt. V: If you run into an emergency while on R&R leave, contact the American Red Cross by calling 1-877-272-7337. Your company should provide you with an e-mail address and DSN phone number in case you have any question while on leave. DSN phone calls can be made at any Military Base/Post and at most National Guard/Reserve Armories.

IS: Does the army pay for all travel, and do they make all the arrangements?

Sgt. V: The military will pay for transportation to and from the airport closest to the leave address. All transportation arrangements will be by a travel agent at Ali Al Salem, Kuwait. Expenses for rental car, bus, train or other modes of transportation will NOT be government funded or reimbursed.

(Continued on page 15)

OPERATION IOWA CARES by Sgt. Charity Lewis

RAMADI, Iraq— Working together to bring smiles to the faces of Iraqi children. United States Army and Marine Corps units along with Spirit of America are helping to bring aid to the children of Iraq.

The idea of doing something for a local school evolved out of the first meeting and they eventually settled on backpacks with school supplies as their final project. Their original goal was to collect 600 backpacks.

"The idea developed between the 224th Engineers of the United States Army and the 5th CAG of the United States Marine Corps working collaboratively to make a positive impact on the community here in Iraq," said Captain Daniel Maerder.

They had support for this effort from a group of Iowans living in the Washington D.C. area, as well as their Family Support Group back home and hundreds of individuals from all over the country who found out about this program through Spirit of America. "By the time all was said and done, the folks back home contributed around 1400 backpacks, said Maerder, which is a true testament of the support citizens from the Iowa area are extending to school children and the citizens of Iraq.

The efforts of our families and friends back home will bring many smiles to many children in Ramadi; it will leave a positive impact that will last for years to come."

"Our communities are reaching out to family's living in a war-torn region, in an effort to support their struggle for freedom, said Maerder; I am honored to be a part of the extensive effort of so many people helping bring joy into the hearts of the Iraqi school children."

It was a long process, said Marine Master Sergeant John Ubaldi, of the 5th CAG, "I received an email in May 2005 from Maerder asking me to help arrange delivery of the school supplies into Iraq.

Ubaldi, 40, a resident of Sacramento, took on the task of getting the 14 pallets of school supplies delivered to Iraq. He made the initial contact with Spirit of America and requested assistance for shipment of the packs. He then assisted with contacting a trucking company from



Specialist Jennifer Sherrill, 224 Eng Bn. A resident of Keokuk, Iowa aids in passing out supplies at the Zan-gora Schools.

Photo by Sgt. Charity Lewis

Elk Horn, MN, NOVCO Incorporated. The owner, Karl Novotny volunteered to donate a truck and driver to the project.

In late July, Marvin Sweeter drove the backpacks from Iowa to Camp Le-



A young Iraqi school girl displays her gift from the generous citizens of Iowa.

Photo by Sgt. Charity Lewis

jeune, N.C. for transport. When delivery did not arrive on time to be shipped from Camp Lejeune, Sweeter continued on to Atlanta where further arrangements had been made through Spirit of

America for air transport to Kuwait by FED/EX.

The mission for Spirit of America is to extend the goodwill of the American people to the champions of freedom, democracy and peace abroad. They provide support to those on the front lines: American military and civilian personnel and people who call to Americans for help in their struggle for freedom and democracy.

Spirit of America is a nonprofit organization supported solely through private-sector contributions. They do not receive funding from the government or military.

The day finally arrived for the delivery of the backpacks to the children of Iraq. Nearly 75 soldiers and a convoy of 20 military vehicles arrived at the front doors of the school. The troops handed out over 1,300 backpacks, along with 2,500 stuffed animals, soccer balls, soccer uniforms and two large pallets of miscellaneous school supplies for the teachers.

"This was a great program, said Lieutenant Colonel Todd Jacobus, it's too bad that every soldier in Ramadi couldn't participate in an event like this, you walk away from this feeling as if there is a great deal of hope."

Jacobus, 38, a resident of Des Moines is the Battalion Commander of the 224th Engineer Battalion. He was the Officer in Charge of that day's mission. We were flooded with requests from folks that were interested in helping out said Jacobus, we put together a newsletter, got our rear detachment involved and it just snowballed from there.

"Our armories started filling up. School supplies were coming in from all over Iowa, and then Michigan, Idaho, Missouri and California," said Jacobus.

One of the reasons we wanted to do this was that if you can impact young Iraqi children and put a seed in their minds that we are here to do something good and that there is hope for them said Jacobus and they see that Soldiers actually care for them, then we setting up the future, our little piece may put a positive spin on it and that's just fantastic.

2ND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM IRON SOLDIERS IN ACTION

Children pose for the camera outside of the Zangora Grade School during Operation Iowa Cares.
Photo by Sgt. Charity Lewis



Spc. John Hartranft of the 28th Military Police and a resident of Pottstown, Pa. posed behind his "Eagle Mounted" M2 and M249 Machine Guns.
Photo by Spc. Sam Kerschner

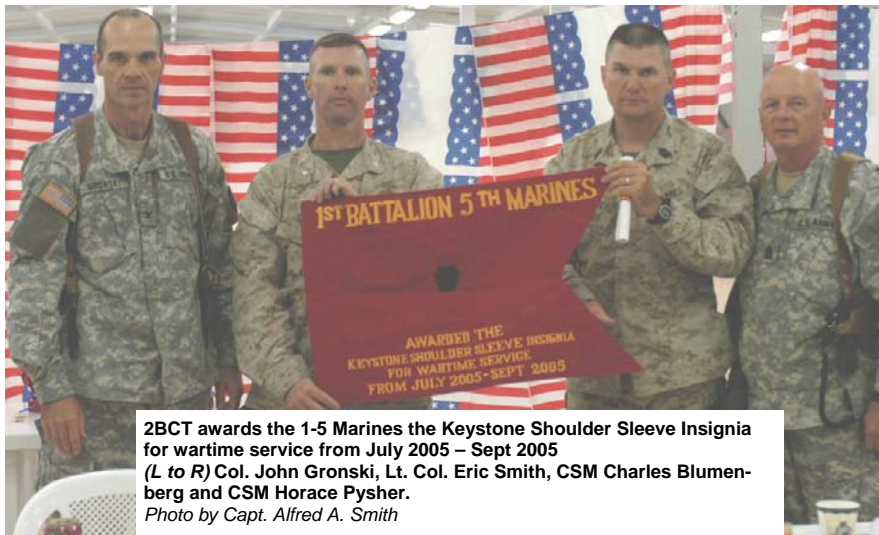


Staff Sgt. Richard Jackson from Philadelphia, Pa and a member of the 104th Cav just prior to moving out on a night patrol.
Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Joe Witmer



Iron Soldiers from Alpha Co. 1-110 Inf. patrol the streets of Habbaniyah, Iraq.
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scariaciottoli

Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scariciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.



2BCT awards the 1-5 Marines the Keystone Shoulder Sleeve Insignia for wartime service from July 2005 – Sept 2005 (L to R) Col. John Gronski, Lt. Col. Eric Smith, CSM Charles Blumenberg and CSM Horace Pysher.
Photo by Capt. Alfred A. Smith



1st. Sgt. Francis Fourney, 46 of the 2nd Brigade HHC and son, Spc. Chad Fourney, 21, servig with the 779th Maintenance Company.



Capt. Jeff Searcey of Kearney, Nebraska and Sgt. Randall Barnason of Hastings, Nebraska. The 1/167 Cavalry Troopers were asking questions of local men during a dis-mounted patrol in Ramadi
Photo by 1st Sgt. Douglas Hughes



Spc. Ryan Duncan of Houston, TX and a member of HHB, 2-222 pulls security at the Glass Factory .
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scariaciotoli

BILLY BLANKS VISITS CAMP RAMADI



Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.



Alpha Company 1/172 Armor
Camp Ar-Ramadi, Iraq
16 September 2005

by Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Lawson

MUSIC FILLS MEMORIAL CHAPEL

RAMADI, Iraq— During the week, Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors of the 2/28 BCT carry weapons to make them combat effective in the theatre of operations in Iraq. On Sundays, a portion of them lay their weapons down and pick up instruments – guitars, base guitars, drumsticks, tambourines, violins - to make them worship effective. This is what one can experience on Sundays when music fills Memorial Chapel.

The Bible says there are a variety of gifts which God gives to people. Those attending the Gospel or Protestant worship services at Memorial Chapel can see those gifts come alive through the multitudinous musical talents of our Soldiers and Marines.

Chaplain (Maj.) Steve Logan (876 EN) is the coordinator for the Protestant band and choir and is responsible for recruiting many of the talented musicians and song leaders for the 1030 service. He says, "We started out very small. The first week I stood alone, leading and accompanying the songs with my guitar. In the following weeks, people have come forward, asking for ways they might contribute to the music." MAJ Fred Tady, the Brigade S-6, was one of them. He says, "I really enjoy being able to play the guitar each week. I'm having my wife send me mine from home. Fortunately we have Soldiers from the 224 EN who had contributed to the chapel music before the arrival of the 2/28th BCT, and they have stepped up to participate as well." These other musicians are: Sgt. Jason Ricketts (base guitar), Spc. Besnon (guitar), Spc. John White (guitar), Sgt. Josh Eklund (keyboard).

Some of the musicians play more than one instrument. 1SG Kandy Fretette, attached to the 2BCT HHC, plays the bass guitar, but also plays clarinet.

She hails from New Hampshire, and plays in the New Hampshire National Guard State Band. 1LT Burke Sorenson (2/222 FA), plays violin as well as the keyboard. One Sunday he was accompanying one of the songs with the keyboard. Then on the final verse he stepped aside, picked up his violin, and played a beautiful stringed harmony.

At the Protestant Gospel service at 1400, the music is quite lively. You can definitely clap your hands and tap your feet to these songs because there's a special kind of energy to the music. Drummer Spc. Lenny Burrell (876 EN) finds it gratifying to play for this service. "I practice just about every chance I get," he said. "When I have the time I'll go over to the MWR center as well. One

day I saw a bulletin board announcement asking for interested musicians, and I jumped on it."

The same was true for bass guitarist, 1LT Roscoe Harris (D co. 779). "I was wondering what way I could contribute to the worship, and this gave me the perfect opportunity," he said. Harris is one of the co-directors, along with Cpl. Tamara Saunders (2d MAR DIV).

The Gospel Choir members include: Sgt. Robyn Martin (228 FSB), Sgt. Emily Zike (2/222 FA), PFC Angel Hector (876 EN), CW2 Darcell

May (983 ECB), Spc. Jackie Costello (983 EN), Sgt. Brian Byrd (876 EN), Spc. Ebonie Ramsey (983 ECB), Spc. George McCurry (D Co. 779), SSG Michael Ellison (D Co. 779), Spc. Sharlelle Butler (2/29 MP), SFC Joe Nelson (138 SIG), Sgt. George Gibson, Sgt. Gerald Thomas (983 ECB), Spc. Terrell McKissick (983 ECB), and Sgt. Irving Addison (D Co. 779). The director is Cpl. Tamara Saunders (2d MAR DIV).

More than anything, these musicians and vocalists want to provide our Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors the opportunity to have a meaningful worship experience so that they can get closer to God. When the music fills Memorial Chapel, one definitely gets that chance.



The Choir is made up of many different Soldiers with different backgrounds and units. They bring excitement and entertainment to Memorial Chapel.

Photos By Sgt 1st Class Richard Scaricciottoli



Three female Soldiers, Sgt. Emily Zike (2/222 FA), Spc. Jane Morgan (D Co. 779th), and Spc. Darla Gray (D Co. 779th) blend their inspirational voices together to provide a solid base for singing the songs. "It's very helpful having these voices leading the way, especially when singing a song the worship participants may not know," said Chaplain Logan.

The emphasis is on contemporary music, but the group is not limited to that. "I enjoy singing the old and the new," said Sgt. Zike. Right now, the focus of the early service is on contemporary and the evening service (1900) on traditional.

THE POWER OF MOTIVATION by Sgt. Kathy Conn and Spc. Jennifer Conn

Billy Blanks motivates thousands of people daily with his amazing videos. We were honored to experience first hand, how Billy and Shellie encourage everyone to be their best. On 18 September 2005 Camp Ar Ramadi's main MWR building was filled with excited participants. The Soldiers were given the opportunity to join Tae-bo creator Billy Blanks and his daughter Shellie Blanks-Cinarosti in a live Tae-bo session.

The "Sprit and Body" tour was the first VIP appearance 2BCT Brigade has experienced. Due to the hostile environment, many celebrities opt to visit more secure locations. Billy and Shellie held two sessions one at 1pm and the other at 7pm. Before the intense workout they walked everyone through some instructional moves. For many people it was their first time to see the moves.

During the workout Billy kept on the move, performing and giving guidance to participating soldiers. By the end of the session it looked like everyone could feel

the burn. This is when Billy brought the group together to share his personal experiences. He discussed how he used strength from above to overcome the many challenges of life. He explained



Sisters Kathy and Jennifer Conn spend time with Billie and Shellie Blanks during Billy Blanks recent Sprit and Body tour.

how his physical strength was built on a strong spiritual foundation. Following his inspirational speech, Billy and Shellie took pictures with their fans and signed autographs.

Despite their busy schedule, when we spotted a softball game, we stopped to greet the teams and hit a couple of pitches. Before we knew it, the second Tae-bo session was about to begin. The morning flew by and we felt as if we had known them for years.

As the building filled, we questioned if there would be enough room for all the participants. That is when; Shellie invited us on stage to perform along side them. We were so honored and didn't give it a second thought. By doing many of the moves for the second time we really understood how motivation is the key. Billy and Shellie have been supporting troops for many years not only by donating care packages but more importantly motivating troops.

The influence the Blanks' had on us was huge! Not only did we get to spend the entire day with our biggest celebrities but we also became friends.

ROCKIN' IN RAMADI by Spc. Sam Kerschner

Not too many of us are aware that there are rock stars living among us. Well not quite, but I'm sure that'll change after this deployment. Spc. Joshua Kepner, along with Spc. Drew Scott, make up the band Flopn' Tailgate.

Spc. Kepner, plays the guitar and enjoys singing. He is attached to Alpha Troop of the 167 Cavalry and a resident of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. His home unit is the 104th Long Range Surveillance detachment. Spc. Drew Scott is also a guitar player and shares in the vocal duties. Scott belongs to Alpha Troop, and lives in Hastings, Nebraska. Surprisingly, their band came together in beautiful Ramadi, Iraq.

Spc. Jeremy Borrell, of Grand Island, Nebraska is the band's manager and came up with the name for the band, he is also a member of the 167 Cav. Their truck's tailgate flops open on every speed bump "That tailgate is a floppin," said Spc. Borrell, that's how I came up with the name. If you want to book them at your next party you'll have to see Borrell and make the necessary arrangements.

Kepner has been playing guitar for



The "Flopn' Tailgates" Spc. Drew Scott, Spc. Jeremy Borrell and Spc. Joshua Kepner.

seven years. Scott, started eight months ago, and is catching on quickly. They write, play and sing their own music. They also take requests, but you have to give them time to learn the songs. Spc. Kepner said it only takes about an hour for them to learn a new song.

They love to play the songs from the

band Nirvana. "They're a big influence; they made music the way it's supposed to be. Kurt Cobain wanted to be in the spotlight and there wasn't any outside influence in their music. They created their own genre of grunge. It's satisfying to know I can play their music," said Kepner.

The band compares their sound to Nirvana's Acoustic-Grunge. If you ask me, they have their own sound and they are definitely worth listening to. Flopn' Tailgate have quite a few songs they have written themselves. The song Broken is my favorite, and I also enjoyed listening to some of their other songs like: Weathered and Dried, Our Song and Silence Kills.

Spc. Kepner recently heard himself play and he thinks his voice could have sounded much better, but I think he sings very well.

If you're lucky enough to hear them play, I suggest requesting Our Song. It's all about being in Camp Ramadi.

So get their autograph now, they will charge you for it when they become famous.

Express Yourself

A Letter from Paula Chapin, Wife of Fallen MSG Chris S. Chapin

My name is Paula Chapin; recently my husband was killed in Iraq. Together with our son Michael we have lived in this area for nineteen years, thirteen of those years have been in Proctor. There have been so many articles and kind words about Chris most people probably feel like they already know him. But what you do not know is how much your support, thoughts and actions have touched my heart. That is the reason for this public letter.

There are no words to express how we felt – starting on the ride home from New Hampshire, when we were finally bringing Chris home – the honor and the respect that was shown by the Vermont State Police and the local law enforcement agencies. Then there were the cards from all over the country including ones from overseas and others from Iraq and Kuwait offering support, prayers and condolences, some with information about what had happened to Chris. The local agencies like the Hospital (RRMC) and the American Legion (Post 31), Aldous Funeral Home and so many others that sent food and donated time and support. Then the people over 900 family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors who came to the calling hours and service, some who did not know Chris or our family personally but came just to say “thank you.” His military family who kept a twenty-four hour vigil so he would never be alone; some Soldiers who were on their own two week leave from overseas taking time from their families to say good-bye to Chris. The speakers who so accurately described Chris and his commitment to his personal values, his family and in fact the way he lived his life. Finally – on the way to take Chris to his new home, the people who lined the streets, the flag draped over the road – there are just no words to describe our feelings.

Chris was a very quiet man, a man who never looked for public recognition but I know he is deeply honored (not only for the tribute to him but to our Country's other soldiers fighting for what they believe in) and we are all very proud to be part of this community.

Your kindness, thoughts and prayers are helping us get through the most difficult time in our lives; he was always a hero to us, now he is a hero to others.

On behalf of Michael and myself I can only say thank you.

*Proud wife and son of MSG. Chris S. Chapin,
Paula and Michael*

I would also like to write to his military family. As long as I have known Chris he has been in the military and I have to say that the entire time I honestly just didn't get why. I didn't understand how he could be so messy at home and then take such pride in getting his uniform ready for a drill weekend, or spend so much time shinning his boots – no, I just didn't get it. I didn't get his dedication, his commitment or his loyalty to this group of men who he saw one weekend a month and who took him away from me for such long periods of time. Then this happened and I began to see. Your respect for him, your commitment and dedication to making things right for him from the day that he arrived back into Vermont, when General Ranville came to my home and cried when she talked with my family, to the speakers at the service who spoke with such admiration. The men who stood by Chris at the funeral home and the ones who helped me, even taking care of things like transportation. The cards and support from men he had served with including the letters from some of the men in Iraq – you see now I get it! I understand why Chris wanted to be with his men, be a part of this family and now I feel like I am a part of it too. It is this understanding that gives me some comfort when I think about his death; he was truly where he wanted to be, doing what he wanted to do. During one of my conversations with Captain Trudell, he said something to me that now makes sense “it is not about the mission it is about the guy next to you”.

My heart is truly broken over the loss of Chris but you all have touched a piece of it and for that I am truly grateful.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to LTC Daniel Pipes for his help, strength and courage. (A+)

Paula Chapin



FROM THE BRIGADE SERGEANT MAJOR



Command Sgt. Maj.
Horace C. Pysher

Many of you have developed different ways to keep track of our time here in Iraq. Since we are in the football season, I compare our time here to having finished the first quarter with three just as important quarters to go.

We all know that one quarter does not make the game, but it can and will have a great influence on the outcome. When I look at many areas within the Brigade, I will say that we have had a great start.

We have maintained the offensive spirit which the Commander has talked about from day one and it is having an impact on the insurgents. In addition to that, the people of Iraq also see us treating them with the dignity and respect desired by all mankind. We continue to maintain an outstanding safety record which should bring great pride to every Soldier and leader in the Brigade. We continue to make great progress in force protection both on our Forward Operating Bases and throughout our entire area of operations. You, the Soldiers, continue to improve your own personal space along with your unit's areas. Everyone has noticed the difference you have made and I hear good things about all of you.

However, with three more quarters to go, what do we need to do to finish this mission? We need the staffs of all the units to continue their great work in planning so that our fine Soldiers can execute the mission. This will help continue the great success we have had to date. We need each Soldier to remain FOCUSED in everything he and she does to include performing maintenance on weapons, equipment, and facilities, enforcing the Rules of Engagement, abiding by our Escalation of Force guidance as well as maintaining their own Physical Fitness program.

We must continue our noble effort for those who have given everything for us and for America. Keep their spirit with you and know that they would want you to continue this mission. Remember their legacy to us and to all of our

"IRON SOLDIERS"

QUESTIONS ABOUT LEAVE AND PASS

Continued From Page 6

IS: Can I choose what airport I fly into?

Sgt. V: The transportation will be arranged for you. You will not have the option of choosing specific airports.

IS: What do I do if my flight from home is cancelled?

Sgt. V: There are Personnel Assistance Points (PAP) at each gateway. The PAP will assist participants with their transportation. If your flight is cancelled, please see a PAP representative for assistance. If you can not find the PAP, go to a Service Desk at the Airport and ask for assistance. If your flight has been cancelled, please ask the PAP to assist you in contacting your unit to inform them of the situation.

IS: Where do we fly out of, and how do we get there?

Sgt. V: All R&R leave Soldiers will depart the theater thru Ali Al Salem, Kuwait. Transportation will be arranged for each Soldier to get to TQ for manifesting. Once at TQ, Soldiers will manifest at the JACOT and fly to Ali Al Salem.

IS: How far in advance will I know my leave date?

Sgt. V: This will vary on a case to case and month to month basis depending on when Brigade receives the allotted leave and pass slots. Soldiers should know their leave dates one to two weeks prior.

IS: How long is the pass and is travel time included?

Sgt. V: A pass is four days but typically Soldiers will be gone from their unit for seven days (travel time in NOT included).



A Shopping Mall In Doha, Qatar. Stores include Starbucks, Victoria's Secret and Armani.

IS: Will I know where and when to get my flight back, before I leave?

Sgt. V: Before leaving Ali Al Salem for R&R leave, you will given all your flight information to include return travel information.

IS: Can they shorten my leave or pass, for any reason?

Sgt. V: Leave and passes can be shortened if the mission requires.

IS: How do they choose who gets what dates?

Sgt. V: This is determined at the company level. Please see your chain of command for more information.

IS: Do I have to take leave at my Home of Record or can I take leave elsewhere or even outside the United States? Will the army pay for my travel to these destinations?

Sgt. V: Leave may be taken anywhere within the United States & its territories/commonwealths. Leave may also be taken

elsewhere but must be approved by your chain of command. Travel to the nearest airport will be paid for any location that is approved.

IS: What do I do with my IBA and Kevlar?

Sgt. V: While on pass, Soldiers are responsible for securing their IBA and Kevlar themselves. Soldiers who go on leave will turn their IBA and Kevlar into the Brigade LNO at Ali Al Salem. When turning in their equipment they will receive a receipt, for security purposes.

IS: How many bags may I bring on leave?

Sgt. V: Soldiers are authorized to bring one 50 lb. bag, 1 carry-on (not to exceed 15 lbs), and 1 laptop case. Soldiers are responsible to carry their own luggage...if you can't carry it, DON'T take it.

IS: Do I need a passport and if so how do I obtain a one?

Sgt. V: Soldiers DO NOT need a passport to travel to any of the following countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Luxembourg, or the U.S. and its territories/commonwealths. However they will need their ID card and a copy of their orders. If Soldiers are traveling to any other country, they will need a passport.

It is possible to obtain a passport while in Iraq, but extremely difficult. If you need a passport, consult your chain of command.

For any further questions you should contact your **UNIT** Leave Representative.

CAMP RAMADI SPORTS

All photos by Johnny John - MWR Coordinator



(Above) Cpl. Castillo of the 1-5 Marines is the strongest man at Camp Ramadi. With a body Weight of 164, he had an impressive Dead Lift of 465lbs.

(Below) Sgt. Calder Young of the 2nd MPs made the mark with a 380lb Bench Press.



BENCH PRESS PARTICIPANTS	BODY WEIGHT	UNIT	BENCH PRESS		
< 175 pounds					
LCPI Keith Russel	165 lbs	1/5 Weapons	315 lbs		
Hopson	160 lbs	B TRP 104th CAV	285 lbs		
Longto	174 lbs	B TRP 104th CAV	300 lbs		
John Philip Marquez	172 lbs	2-222nd FA	335 lbs		
Michael Goeringer	168 lbs	A Co 1/5	275 lbs		
Cpl. Pergira	174 lbs	C Co 1/5	300 lbs		
T.W. O'Kane	174 lbs	ARDF	275 lbs		
Gonzalez	150 lbs	C Co 1/5	225 lbs		
Kunce	165 lbs		295 lbs		
175 - 215 pounds					
Nelson	180 lbs	C Battery 222 FA	350 lbs		
Owens	185 lbs	138th Signal	335 lbs		
Ryan Webb	198 lbs	C Co 1/5	285 lbs		
Jordan	210 lbs	1/5 Engineers	275 lbs		
William Young	190 lbs	2-222nd FA	370 lbs		
> 215 pounds					
Robert Rodriguez	252 lbs	C Co 1/5	360 lbs		
POWER LIFTING PARTICIPANTS	BODY WEIGHT	UNIT	BENCH PRESS	SQUAT	DEAD LIFT
< 175 pounds					
Marcus Davis	170 lbs	2nd MP C Co	260 lbs	285 lbs	365 lbs
Dan Medina	143 lbs	2nd MP C Co	250 lbs	275 lbs	365 lbs
Seaman	170 lbs	A Co 1/5 3rd Plt	325 lbs	385 lbs	405 lbs
Chris Scott	168 lbs	224th Eng Bn	275 lbs	315 lbs	405 lbs
Chatman	174 lbs	C Co 1/5	270 lbs	350 lbs	415 lbs
Cpl. Castillo	165 lbs	1/5 H&S	285 lbs	405 lbs	465 lbs
Sgt Calder Young	196 lbs	2nd MP C Co	380 lbs	440 lbs	500 lbs
175 - 215 pounds					
Chavez	180 lbs	1/5 Marines	295 lbs	335 lbs	365 lbs
James Davis	180 lbs	138th Signal	315 lbs	375 lbs	320 lbs
Daniel Murphy	194 lbs	2nd MP C Co	295 lbs	425 lbs	455 lbs
Booth	210 lbs	224th Eng Bn	340 lbs	400 lbs	515 lbs
Rooks	212 lbs	224th Eng Bn	325 lbs	420 lbs	495 lbs
Josh Voss	210 lbs	224th Eng Bn	325 lbs	405 lbs	450 lbs
Lewis Svododa	178 lbs	1/167th CAV	315 lbs	315 lbs	335 lbs
Ryan Kelley	202 lbs	2nd MP C Co	315 lbs	440 lbs	455 lbs
> 215 pounds					
Sgt Harris	219 lbs	2nd MP C Co	340 lbs	475 lbs	505 lbs
Cpt Morris	220 lbs	2nd MP C Co	385 lbs	465 lbs	515 lbs
Cliff Bishop	248 lbs	222 HHB	315 lbs	455 lbs	520 lbs

Volleyball Team Standings		Matches Won	Matches Lost
1	Thirsty Beavers	9	0
2	Illinois Boys	8	0
3	Yeager Bombs	7	1
4	Praetorians	6	2
5	Squirrels	6	3
6	Brig Rats	5	3
7	91 ball Smackers	5	5
8	HIV	5	5
9	The Extensions	4	4
10	Log Dogs	4	5
11	Hercules Heroes	3	6
12	Flopping Tailgate	2	6
13	Greased Lightning	2	7
14	Inbreds	0	9
15	Staff Magnums	0	10
STANDINGS AS OF 30 SEP 2005			



Spc. Bracken 28 MP vs Spc. Powers 779th Maintenance

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Public Affairs Office

Brigade PAO
2/28TH BCT - Camp Ar-Ramadi
APO, AE 09362-9997

Brigade Commander
Col. John L. Gronski

Deputy Commander
Col. Regis A. Cardiff

Brigade Command Sgt. Major
CSM Horace C. Pysher

Executive Officer
Lt. Col. Christopher T. Yeakle

Public Affairs Officer
Capt. Alfred A. Smith
alfred.a.smith@us.army.mil

Public Affairs Team
Sgt. 1st Class Richard Scariaciotoli
richard.scariciotoli@us.army.mil
Spc. Samatha Kerschner

Public Affairs Representatives
HHC 2/28 B.C.T.
Capt. Steven G. Fischer
1st Lt. Rose Forest
Spc. Kimberly Calvert

876th Engineers Battalion
Maj. Chuck Kim
1st Lt. Monica Luongo
Master Sgt. Michael Henry

HHC 876th Engineers
Staff Sgt. Dominic Mazza
Sgt. Michael Dubovecky

135th Engineers
Sgt. Robert Foreman

861st Engineers
1st Lt. Russell Degraw
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Cribari

228th Forward Support Battalion
Capt. Jason Guerrettaz
Staff Sgt. Marcie Ficht
Sgt. Michelle Lynn
Spc. Aaron Berger
Spc. Kroll

222nd Field Artillery
Maj. Sterling Mc Murrin

104th U.S. Cavalry
Sgt. 1st Class Ben Gomez

231st Military Intelligence
1st Lt. Chris Lew

A Co. 138th Signal Battalion
2nd Lt. Erick McCorkle
Sgt. Matt Wright
Spc. Chris Greuter

1/109th Infantry & A Co. 3/103rd Armor
Capt. Patrick R. Monahan

1/110th Infantry & C Co. 1/103rd Armor
1st Lt. Antonia Greene
1st Lt. David Catherman
2nd Lt. Sean Bufano

1/172nd Armor
Sgt. 1st Class Michael S. Currier

1/167 U.S. Cavalry
1st Lt. Jacques Smith
1st Lt. James Belprez

CAMP RAMADI SPORTS

All photos by Johnny John - MWR Coordinator

SOFTBALL CO-CHAMPS



(Above) The Big Rats from the 2nd MP Battalion. They were the co-winners of the Softball Tournament held in August.

(Right) Luke Rodino from the 2nd MP Battalion won the 10Km race with a time of 33 minutes, 16 seconds.

(Below) Howard Bonzo, Mike Kjar, Swinney and William Freer prior to the 10km and 5km race that was held on the morning of 24 September.



5Km & 10Km RACE

(Results posted far right)



5 Kilometer Race

29 years old and younger

		Race Date 9/24
Daniel Smith (22)	2 MP	19 min 34 sec
Hector Renderos (20)	2 MP	20 min 37 sec
Jason Downy (22)	138th	23 min 28 sec
Zadra Cardenas (25) (female)	HHC	24 min 44 sec
Darla Gray (20) (female)	779th	26 min 05 sec
Swinney (20)	222nd	27 min 04 sec

30-39 years old

Josh Dobbs (33)	138th	21 min 53 sec
Jeff Wheeland (31)	983rd	22 min 05 sec
James Feaster (31)	983rd	22 min 26 sec
Joseph Nelson (35)	138th	22 min 30 sec
Ken Kincaid (33)	779th	24 min 40 sec
Chris Dziubek (38)		26 min 05 sec

40 years old and older

Dale Nelson (46)	983rd	22 min 02 sec
Kevin McLinn (45)	983rd	25 min 40 sec
Calvin Smith (46)	983rd	36 min 18 sec

10 Kilometer Race

29 years old and younger

		Race Date 9/24
Luke Rodino (23)	2 MP	33 min 16 sec
Mike Kjar (28)	222nd	35 min 55 sec
Everardocasas (26)	779th	36 min 47 sec
Krouse (24)	983rd	44 min 39 sec
Domengieaux (23)	983 rd	44 min 39 sec

30-39 years old

William Freer (38)	222nd	40 min 32 sec
Robert Rice (34)	ISF	42 min 27 sec
Dave Kizer	983rd	63 min 31 sec

40 years old and older

Ernest White (43)	983rd	44 min 39 sec
Alan Brown (41)	876th	46 min 14 sec
Rachael Chastanet (41) (female)	514th	51 min 54 sec
Andy Gordon (42)	118th	52 min 24 sec
Howard Bonzo (42)	222nd CB	55 min 44 sec

Have a story or picture for the Iron Soldiers?



Contributions from all Soldiers throughout the 2nd Brigade Combat Team are encouraged for consideration. Please enclose a detailed description of the people (name, rank and unit) and subject matter for each story and photo. Include your name, unit and contact information.

Contact your unit Public Affairs Rep located on the left side of this page or send an email to richard.scariciotoli@us.army.mil



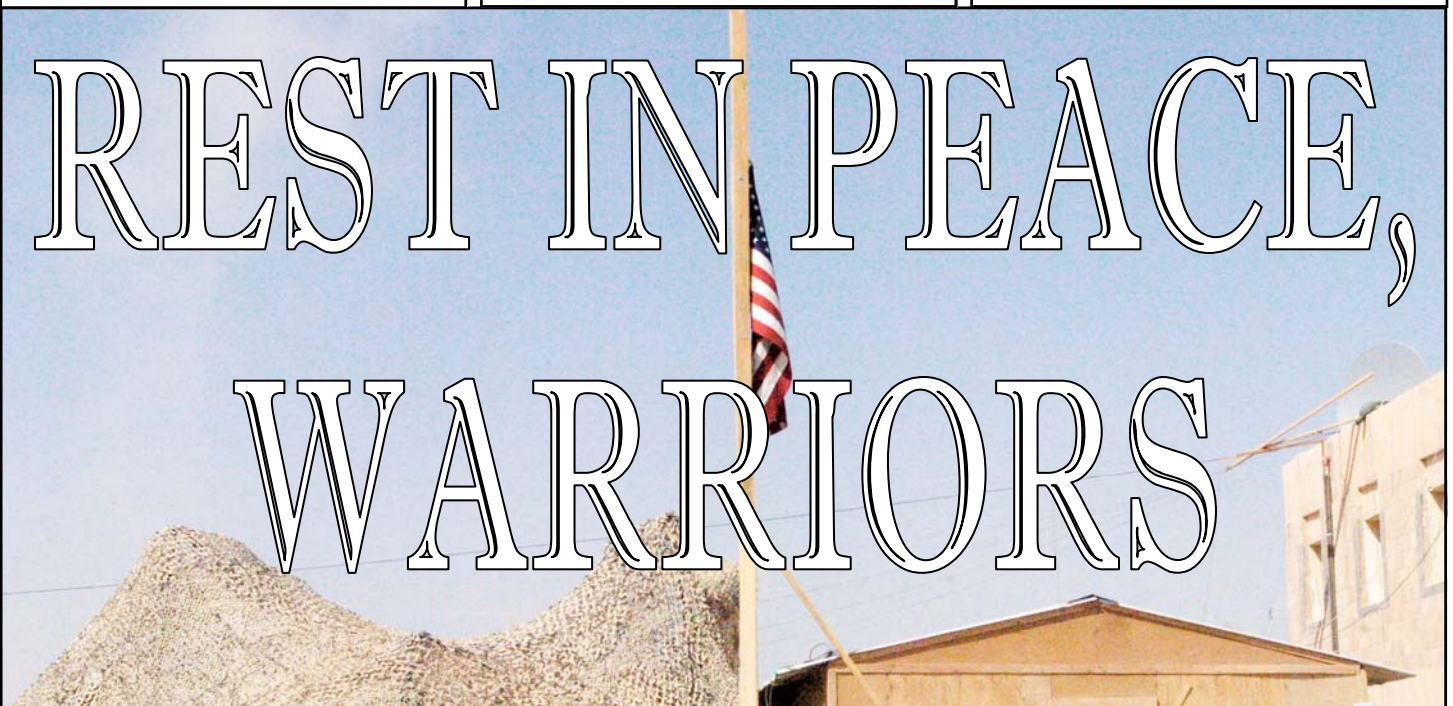
In Memory Of
Lance Corp. Shane Swanberg
Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines



In Memory Of
First Lieutenant Mark Dooley
Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 172nd Armor



In Memory Of
Sergeant Michael Egan
Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 104th U.S. Cavalry



In Memory Of
Specialist William Fernandez
104th Long Range Surveillance Detachment



In Memory Of
Sergeant William Evans
Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry



In Memory Of
Sergeant Scott McLaughlin
Headquarters Co., 1st Battalion, 172nd Armor